

PROVIDER GUIDE TO HOUSING SUPPORT

This information was compiled members of the River Valleys Continuum of Care (CoC).

River Valleys CoC is a coalition dedicated to preventing and ending homelessness in southern Minnesota by coordinating services and maximizing resources. For more information about this group visit, www.threeriverscap.org/continuum-of-care.

A direct link to the document is <https://www.threeriverscap.org/continuum-of-care/resources-for-state-program-grantees>.

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Minnesota Housing Support Program

INTRODUCTION

Housing Support is a state-funded program that provides a monthly income supplement to pay for room and board for seniors and adults with disabilities who have low income. The program aims to prevent or reduce homelessness and institutionalization. The amount of a Housing Support payment is based on a federal and state standard of what an individual would need, at a minimum, to live in the community. In some cases, Housing Support may pay a supplemental amount to the basic rate. Licensed or registered settings that can qualify for a Housing Support Agreement can include adult foster care homes, boarding and lodging, supervised living settings, non-certified boarding care homes, housing with additional services establishments and other assisted living, and long-term homeless supportive housing.

County Human Service Departments are responsible for the evaluation of all Housing Support Agreements. Providers will also work with the financial assistance department, to facilitate the payments for eligible Housing Support participants. Depending on the type of setting, providers will need to secure all needed State of Minnesota (Department of Human Services and Department of Health) licensing/registrations prior to the approval of a Housing Support Agreement. The providers will also need to secure all needed licensing, variances and inspection certifications required by the local city/township where the facility is located.

This guide is for existing Housing Support providers and providers who are interested in pursuing Housing Support funding. Within the guide you will find the steps necessary to obtain a Housing Support agreement and expectations that come along with the Housing Support agreement.

Before the funds may be used, the participant, the living situation, & provider must meet statutory eligibility requirements.

- Provider eligibility for Housing Support funding is determined by the county.
- Participant eligibility is determined by county financial assistance department and is based on income, assets and disability.

Completing an application is not a guarantee the vendor/provider will be approved for a Housing Support Agreement. No payments are issued until there is a signed agreement. Funding for eligible individuals can only begin as of the date the Housing Support Agreement is executed.

For more information visit the Housing Support section of the [DHS website](#) and the Minnesota Revisor website for [Housing Support State Statute](#).

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HOUSING SUPPORT RATES

The following provides information on Housing Support rates and how they are identified in the Minnesota Department of Human Services payment and information systems. Housing Support is a payment directly to the provider of housing on behalf of the eligible person.

Housing Support Rate:

Effective July 1, 2020, this base rate is \$934 per month. It is automatically adjusted each year based on changes made in the Federal Benefit Rate (FBR) of the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program and changes in the value of food support for an individual.

To receive a Housing Support payment, a person must meet certain eligibility requirements. Counties administer the Housing Support program for the state and are responsible for determining eligibility.

- Must be 18 and older and disabled/have a disabling condition or be age 65+
- Must meet basis of eligibility for General Assistance (GA) or Social Security Insurance (SSI)
- A Professional Statement of Need -(PSN) may be used to verify the basis of eligibility for clients not receiving Social Security Benefits
- Countable income: must be less than the maximum benefit.
 - earned income must be reported every 6 months.
- Countable assets: must be within the asset limit for the program.
 - \$10,000 except for SSI recipients which are lower (follow SSI rules in those cases)
- Transitioning from Residential Treatment (new July 1, 2020 see the FAQ section for more information)

Individuals must apply for Housing Support, typically through a Combined Application Form (CAF), applymn.org, or Change Report Form (DHS-2402) if a person is open on cash assistance program already.

Supplemental Service rate

The [Supplemental Service](#) rate can only be paid in specific types of settings:

- Board and lodging
- Board and lodging with special services
- Non-certified boarding care home
- Supervised living facility
- Registered as housing with services
- Tribe certified
- Community long-term homeless supportive housing
- Registered as housing with services
- Tribe certified

New board and lodge with special services beds cannot be added to the system unless a facility closes, and a replacement is developed with an equivalent number of beds.

The Housing Support Supplemental Service Rate was established by the Minnesota Legislature in 1993. Beginning in 2000, Cost of Living Adjustments and reductions have been applied to this rate. Effective July 1, 2019 the Supplemental Service Rate is \$482.84. Counties negotiate the Supplemental Service Rate with providers and cannot exceed the maximum unless the county agrees to pay the amount over the maximum with county funds, or the Legislature has specifically authorized a higher rate for a facility. These facilities typically serve clients who are mentally ill or chemically dependent and are not eligible for a Medical Assistance waiver.

Difficulty of Care

The maximum payment for the Difficulty of Care (DOC) equals the maximum standard for the Supplemental Service Rate.

Housing Support Benefit Payment Structure

Housing Support benefits are paid directly to the Housing Support provider by the county that services the individual's case. Payments may be paid in two ways:

- **Pre-payments:** this type of payment would be issued at the beginning of the month for individuals eligible for Housing Support. The majority of Housing Support providers receive this type of payment.
- **Post-payments:** this type of payment is issued at the end of the month for individuals eligible for Housing Support.
 - Post payments must be issued when an individual's placement in a Housing Support setting is expected to last 30 days or less.

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GUIDELINES FOR ALL HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Although each Housing Support program is unique, they all share some common components.

Program Requirements

- The "Housing Support Rate" or the "Housing Rate" will be used for shelter, fuel, food, utilities, household supplies, and other costs necessary to provide room and board. Examples of these expenses may include: toilet paper, bed linens, shampoo, toothpaste, garbage bags, etc.
- In a group setting a portion of the "Housing Rate" must be spent each month on food for each participant. The amount required may or may not change each year on July 1. This amount is based on determinations of the Federal Food Support Programs (SNAP). The provider must inform individuals they are eligible for SNAP upon discharge from the Housing Support facility and/or program. *Providers may be required to provide documentation to prove food purchased meets SNAP requirements.*
- A provider must maintain all necessary licenses through the appropriate licensing authority.
- A provider must give the county a list of residency requirements that include violations that could result in eviction.

Staff Qualifications and Training

Background checks are required for all employees/volunteers who have direct contact (face-to-face care, training, supervision, counseling, or medication assistance), or who have unsupervised access to recipients, their personal property, or their private data.

- All staff members who have direct contact with recipients must have skills and knowledge acquired through **one or more of the following:**
 - A course of study in a health or human services-related field leading to a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, or associate degree; **or**
 - One-year experience with the target population served (can include being a member of the target population served); **or**
 - Experience as the Minnesota Department of Human Services certified peer specialist
- Meets requirements of unlicensed personnel under Minnesota Statutes sections 144A.43 to 144A.483
- Provider and staff are required to complete two online DHS trainings, Vulnerable Adult Mandated Reporting and Housing Support Orientation.

Staff who transport participants are required to have a valid driver's license.

See the Housing Support Agreement for contract termination terms. Minnesota Department of Human Services has the right to immediately suspend or terminate the Housing Support Agreement when it is determined the health or welfare of the housing or service recipients is endangered, or when there is reasonable cause to believe that the provider has breached a material term of the agreement. These agreements are non-transferable.

DHS has two types of Housing Support agreements. They are group and community.

Group Housing Support agreements require three meals a day be provided and does not allow clients to use SNAP benefits. Agreement holders are required to ensure that Room and Board standards are met.

Room and board provisions include:

- Three nutritional meals a day
- Bed, clothing storage, linen, bedding, and laundry supplies.
- Housekeeping
- Maintenance and operation of the building and grounds.

Supplemental services provision includes:

- General oversight and supervision
- Arranging for medical and social services
- Assistance with transportation
- Other items if required by legislature

Adult Foster Care, Board and Care, Board and Lodge, Customized Living, and Intensive Residential Treatment Services (IRTS) settings all use the group version of the housing agreement.

Community Housing Support agreements require that participants hold their own lease and have the option to prepare their own meals. Clients have access to SNAP benefits. Providers must demonstrate due diligence to ensure that recipients all have the required Room and Board standards (i.e. provide directly or otherwise assure provision of all required items). Long-Term Homeless (LTH) Housing Support settings use the community version of the housing agreement.

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HOUSING SUPPORT SETTINGS

ADULT FOSTER CARE (CORPORATE AND FAMILY)

Adult Foster Care (AFC) is a type of housing for people with disabilities and seniors who need some daily care. Some caregivers own and live in the homes they provide care in. Others are employees paid to live on site. When the caregiver lives in the home, it is called Family Adult Foster Care.

AFC homes house one to four adults with disabilities and seniors who live together, typically each with their own bedroom. The living room, bathrooms, kitchen, and any other rooms are often shared. Housing Support may pay up to the full cost of room, board, and services, depending on the participant's income, eligibility for an AFC-Difficulty of Care rating or eligibility for MA-Waiver programs. Services provided to individuals may also include the delivery of personal care, household and living skills assistance or training, medication assistance and assistance safeguarding cash resources.

**The State of Minnesota has a moratorium on new corporate adult foster care settings and has capped the number of homes allowed. Counties cannot grant licenses for corporate applicants unless those providers plan to serve specific individuals who meet certain criteria. The county has no information about when the state will lift the moratorium.*

Program and Building Eligibility

Adult foster care homes are licensed by the [Minnesota Department of Human Services \(DHS\)](#) which delegates the licensing responsibilities to your local county.

Participant Eligibility and Application

Beyond the requirements listed in *Guidelines for all Housing Support Programs*, individuals living in an adult foster care setting must have some type of functional impairment that makes it difficult for them to live alone. MnCHOICES Assessments can help determine if participants would qualify for waiver programs and additional services. For additional information about MnCHOICES assessments, call your local county.

Funding Sources and Expectations

- Group version of Housing Support agreement
- Any county program specific documents
- All rules and expectations of additional licensure held by the provider.

While some residents of adult foster care may be private pay, most residents are on a waiver which pays for their services and support.

Housing Support can cover base rate/room and board. Including:

- Food preparation and service for three nutritional meals a day on site.
- The vendor must be able to verify upon request that at least \$192 per month is spent for the purchase of food for each Housing Support recipient.
- A bed, clothing storage, linen, bedding, laundering, and laundry supplies or service.
- Housekeeping, including lavatory supplies or service.
- Maintenance and operation and grounds, including heat, water, garbage removal, electricity, telephone for the site, cooling, supplies, and parts and tools to repair and maintain equipment and facilities.

HOUSING WITH SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTS

Housing with services establishments provide sleeping accommodations to one or more adult residents, and offer one or more regularly scheduled health-related services, or two or more regularly scheduled supportive services. Supportive services can be offered or provided directly by the establishment or by another entity arranged for by the

establishment. Housing with Services Establishments can function as assisted living, customized living settings, or support participants to live independently in the community. There are updated regulations in this service model that will take effect in 2021. Contact your local county for more information.

These establishments may offer services that help with daily living, such as:

- Cooking
- Cleaning
- Laundry
- Help taking medications
- Personal care assistance services, like help during meals, toileting, bathing, and dressing.

Program and Building Eligibility

Housing with Service establishments must register as Housing with Services through the Minnesota [Department of Health \(MDH\)](#). Housing with Services Establishments who provide home care services for a fee must maintain a Comprehensive Home Care license. Establishments are required to obtain a Lodging Establishment License (when the setting includes 5 or more units) and a Food and Beverage Establishment License if staff prepare food for participants.

Participant Eligibility and Application

MnCHOICES Assessments can determine eligibility for 24-hour customized living/assisted living. For additional information about MnCHOICES assessments, call your local county.

Funding Source and Expectations

- Group version of Housing Support agreement
- Any county program specific documents
- All rules and expectations of additional licensure held by the provider.

Housing Support benefits can help pay for room, board, and sometimes services in approved locations.

Housing Support can cover base rate/room and board. Including:

- Food preparation and service for three nutritional meals a day on site.
- The vendor must be able to verify upon request that at least \$192 per month is spent for the purchase of food for each Housing Support recipient.
- A bed, clothing storage, linen, bedding, laundering, and laundry supplies or service.
- Housekeeping, including lavatory supplies or service.
- Maintenance and operation and grounds, including heat, water, garbage removal, electricity, telephone for the site, cooling, supplies, and parts and tools to repair and maintain equipment and facilities.

BOARD AND LODGE

Board and Lodges are licensed, congregate settings that offer a room (often shared) and three meals a day to eligible adults and, occasionally, families. Board and Lodges can vary in size, with five or more people living together. Some settings are short-term, time-limited. Others may be supportive housing with no specific time limit. Board and Lodges can require participation in skills training or other programming. Others have no service requirements. Each Board and Lodge setting can look very different.

Program and Building Eligibility

Board and Lodges are required to be licensed by the Minnesota [Department of Health \(MDH\)](#) for a Lodging Establishment License, and/or a Food and Beverage Establishment License when staff prepare food for participants. Board and Lodges with a Service Rate must also have a Special Services Registration with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH).

Participant Eligibility and Application

Beyond the requirements listed in *Guidelines for all Housing Support Programs*, the target population may be specialized to one disability group (usually persons with a mental illness or substance abuse diagnosis) or gender, or the setting may serve a mix of persons who need and want the level of care provided.

Funding Source and Expectations

- Group version of Housing Support agreement
- Any county program specific documents
- All rules and expectations of additional licensure held by the provider.

Supplemental Service Standards:

- Eligible recipients must have the two of the following needs
 - Tenancy supports to assist with finding their own home, negotiate with landlord, secure furniture and household supplies, understand and maintain tenant responsibilities, conflict negotiation, budget and financial education.
 - Supportive services to assist with basic living and social skills, household management, monitoring overall well-being, and problem solving.
 - Employment supports to assist with maintaining or increase employment, increase earnings, understand and utilize appropriate benefits and services, improve physical or mental health, move toward self-sufficiency and achieve personal goals.
 - Health supervision services to assist with preparation an administration of medications other than injectable, the provision of therapeutic diets, take vital signs, and aid in dressing, grooming, bathing or with walking devices.
- Any provider receiving a supplemental service rate must maintain case notes with dates and descriptions that relate to the PSN.

Housing Support will cover base rate/room and board. Including:

- Food preparation and service for three nutritional meals a day on site.
- The vendor must be able to verify upon request that at least \$192 per month is spent for the purchase of food for each Housing Support recipient.
- A bed, clothing storage, linen, bedding, laundering, and laundry supplies or service.
- Housekeeping, including lavatory supplies or service.
- Maintenance and operation and grounds, including heat, water, garbage removal, electricity, telephone for the site, cooling, supplies, and parts and tools to repair and maintain equipment and facilities.

LONG TERM HOMELESS (LTH) PROGRAMS

The purpose of the Housing Support Long Term Homeless Program is to house individuals who have a disabling condition and have experienced long periods of homelessness through tenant-based supportive housing opportunities in integrated housing. Tenant-based rent subsidies and housing support services follow individuals over time and across housing choices, providing maximum financial and emotional continuity. This approach minimizes the demands on individuals of forming new relationships with different service providers if the individual graduates or fails at a specific or site-based program.

*Using Housing Support to provide housing to individuals who have experienced long term homelessness is consistent with *Olmstead v. LC, 119 S. Ct. 2176 (1999)*, which requires maximizing integration.* The intent is to assist individuals to successfully access rental market housing and to maintain stable housing with the assistance of effective services that meet their needs and preferences. Some people will need intensive, highly professionalized services while others will want a more supportive approach; many will have needs and preferences that change significantly over time.

Funding Source and Expectations

- Community version of Housing Support agreement
- Any county program specific documents
- All rules and expectations of additional licensure held by the provider.

Program and Building Eligibility

- Providers need a Housing Support Agreement with the county specific to the Long-Term Homeless Program.
- Housing Program must participate in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and regional Coordinated Entry process.
- Housing where a person receives Housing Support for supportive housing must pass a habitability inspection (Habitability Inspection Form) to be completed by the provider.
- The Housing Support participant must sign a lease agreement with a landlord that outlines the responsibilities of the tenant and the responsibilities of the landlord.
- Housing Support will cover base rate/room and board. Including:
 - A bed, clothing storage, linen, bedding, laundering, and laundry supplies.
 - Housekeeping, including lavatory supplies or service.
 - Maintenance and operation and grounds, including heat, water, garbage removal, electricity, telephone for the site, cooling, supplies, and parts and tools to repair and maintain equipment and facilities.
- Supplemental Service Standards:
 - Eligible recipients must have the two of the following needs
 - Tenancy supports to assist with finding their own home, negotiate with landlord, secure furniture and household supplies, understand and maintain tenant responsibilities, conflict negotiation, budget and financial education.
 - Supportive services to assist with basic living and social skills, household management, monitoring overall well-being, and problem solving.
 - Employment supports to assist with maintaining or increase employment, increase earnings, understand and utilize appropriate benefits and services, improve physical or mental health, move toward self-sufficiency and achieve personal goals.
 - Health supervision services to assist with preparation and administration of medications other than injectable, the provision of therapeutic diets, take vital signs, and help in dressing, grooming, bathing or with walking devices.
 - All vendors providing supplemental services must maintain case notes with date and description of services provided to individual recipients.
- Housing Program needs a **Housing Plan** with each tenant that addresses the following service requirements:
 - Help with finding and applying for permanent, affordable housing
 - Advocating for tenant during landlord negotiation
 - Help tenants understand terms of lease
 - Be available if problems arise with landlord, neighbors, etc.
 - Help ensuring community integration

Individual Eligibility

Beyond the requirements listed in guidelines for all Housing Support Programs, the individual must:

- Meet MN Housing's LTH definition: continuously homeless (lacking a fixed, adequate nighttime residence) for the last year or 4 times in the last 3 years. Any period of institutionalization or incarceration are excluded when determining the length of time, the household has been homeless.
- Provide verification of Coordinated Entry Assessment.

MINNESOTA HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAM

ESTABLISHING A NEW HOUSING SUPPORT AGREEMENT

All programs wanting to access Housing Support funds are required to complete a Housing Support application.

ADULT FOSTER CARE AND HOUSING WITH SERVICES ESTABLISHMENTS

Providers interested in establishing a new AFC or Housing with Services Establishments will be required to complete several steps prior to being eligible to receive Housing Support funds.

- Licensed with the Minnesota Department of Health as a Housing with Services Establishment and/or Comprehensive Health Care.
- Licensed with the Department of Human Services (DHS) as an Adult Foster Care through your local county.
- Complete provider enrollment through DHS.
- Mandatory background checks for all staff/volunteers who have direct contact with Housing Support participants.
- Knowledge and experience with the target population.
- Completion of two online DHS trainings: Vulnerable Adult Mandated Reporting and Housing Support Orientation.
- Requirement for all staff to have a valid driver's license if transporting participants.
- Complete a Housing Support application through your local county. Attach the following documentation to a completed Housing Support application:
 - Current copy(s) of Minnesota Department of Health Housing with Services and/or Comprehensive Health Care licenses
 - Current copy of Minnesota Department of Human Services Adult Foster Care License
 - List of residency requirements that could result in eviction
 - Tenant lease (required for Housing with Services Establishments)
 - Tenant admission/screening process
 - Tenant discharge plan

Existing Adult Foster Care wanting to establish a new setting will be required to follow the steps as outlined above. Your local county may require existing provider to report outcomes of existing programs along with the Housing Support application.

Funding Sources and Expectations

- Group version of Housing Support agreement
- Any county program specific documents
- All rules and expectations of additional licensure held by the provider.

While some residents of adult foster care may be private pay, most residents are on a waiver which pays for their services and support. Housing Support can cover base rate/room and board. Including:

- Food preparation and service for three nutritional meals a day on site.
- The vendor must be able to verify upon request that at least \$192 per month is spent for the purchase of food for each Housing Support recipient.
- A bed, clothing storage, linen, bedding, laundering, and laundry supplies or service.
- Housekeeping, including lavatory supplies or service.
- Maintenance and operation and grounds, including heat, water, garbage removal, electricity, telephone for the site, cooling, supplies, and parts and tools to repair and maintain equipment and facilities.

**There is a moratorium on establishing new Corporate Adult Foster Care beds in the state of Minnesota.*

BOARD AND LODGE SETTINGS

Providers interested in establishing a new board and lodge setting will be required to complete several steps prior to being eligible to receive Housing Support funds.

- A location will need to be identified. The provider will need to receive approval to use the residence as a board and lodging facility from the local city council and zoning commission. The county will require proof of this approval.
- The setting will need to be licensed by the Minnesota Department of Health.
- Minnesota Department of Health Special Services Registration for Board and Lodges with a Service Rate if receiving a service rate.
- Employee requirements:
 - Mandatory background checks for all staff/volunteers who have direct contact with Housing Support participants.
 - Knowledge and experience the with target population.
 - Completion of two online DHS trainings: Vulnerable Adult Mandated Reporting and Housing Support Orientation.
 - Requirement for all staff to have a valid driver's license if transporting participants.
- Complete a Housing Support application through your local county.
- Attach the following documentation to a completed Housing Support application:
 - Current Minnesota Department of Health Board and Lodge licenses
 - Board and Lodges with a Service Rate must attach current Minnesota Department of Health Special Services Registration
 - Lease or house rules that could result in eviction
 - Participant admission/screening process
 - Participant discharge plan if applicable

Existing Board and Lodge providers wanting to establish a new setting will be required to follow the steps as outlined above. The county may require existing provider to report outcomes of existing programs along with the Housing Support application.

LONG TERM HOMELESS PROGRAMS

Providers interested in creating a new Housing Support Long Term Homeless (LTH) program will be required to complete several steps prior to being considered for a Housing Support Agreement.

- The provider must participate and receive referrals from regional Coordinated Entry.
- The provider must be a current Homeless Management and Information System (HMIS) user.
- The provider must have demonstrated knowledge of homeless outreach, housing navigation, and tenant education/advocacy.
- Mandatory background checks for all staff/volunteers who have direct contact with recipients.
- Completion of two online DHS trainings: Vulnerable Adult Mandated Reporting and Housing Support Orientation.
- Requirement for all staff to have a valid driver's license if transporting participants.
- A Housing Support Vendor Profile form submitted to the County for each authorized site/facility
- Required tenant documents will include:
 - Verification of LTH status form
 - Personal Statement of Need form
 - Coordinated Entry Assessment receipt

- There are limited exceptions, contact your local county for more information.
- Habitability Inspection form
- Housing plan example
- A list of reasons why participants would be discharged from your Housing Support LTH program

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RENEWING HOUSING SUPPORT AGREEMENTS

Housing Support Agreements are renewed annually before July 1 when the rate changes occur. Your local county will send an updated Housing Support agreement and Vendor Profile form to providers prior to the rate change. The county staff will verify that the Housing Support provider is still in compliance with all the terms of the Housing Support Agreement prior to an updated agreement being sent.

ADULT FOSTER CARE, HOUSING WITH SERVICES ESTABLISHMENTS, AND BOARD AND LODGE SETTINGS

- Provider must submit all current licenses and registrations.
 - There are updated regulations around licensing and habitability inspections for Housing with Services that will take effect in 2021. Contact your local county for more information.
- Provider will submit a list of residency requirements that could result in eviction (including appeal process).
- Mandatory background checks for all staff/volunteers who have direct contact with recipients.
- Completion of two online DHS trainings: Vulnerable Adult Mandated Reporting and Housing Support Orientation.
- All staff to have a valid driver's license if transporting participants.
- If county staff have been alerted to concerns about a provider during the year, the provider will be contacted, and a plan will be put in place for the provider to get back in compliance with the Housing Support Agreement.
- The county may require existing providers to report updates and outcomes from existing programs.
- A Housing Support Agreement is sent to the provider after verification of submitted materials
- Housing Support Agreement must be signed by provider and returned to the county.

LONG TERM HOMELESS PROGRAMS

- Housing Support LTH providers will be required to have a file on each participant. County staff may audit files to verify required documentation.
 - Verification of LTH status
 - Coordinated Entry Assessment receipt
 - There may be limited exceptions, contact your local county for more information.
 - Habitability Inspection form
 - Items signed by tenant
 - Lease
 - Housing plan
 - A list of reasons why tenant would be discharged from the LTH program
- Mandatory background checks for all staff/volunteers who have direct contact with Housing Support participants.
- Completion of two online DHS trainings: Vulnerable Adult Mandated Reporting and Housing Support Orientation.
- All staff to have a valid driver's license if transporting recipients.
- A meeting may be scheduled with the provider to review any changes in programming and review outcomes from the year.

- If concerns have been identified throughout the year or the annual review process, a plan may be put in place for the provider to get back in compliance with the Housing Support Agreement.

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TENANCY AND LANDLORD RIGHTS

All units or dwellings must have a lease, or similar legally enforceable agreement, which includes the same responsibilities and protections from eviction as all tenants under landlord tenant law of state, county, city or other designated entity. *If tenant laws do not apply*, the written agreement (house rules/intake paperwork) must address eviction processes and appeals comparable to those provided under the jurisdiction's landlord tenant law. The vendor must submit a list of residency requirements that could result in eviction prior to approval of the Housing Support agreement.

For more information about Landlord/Tenant rights, visit the [MN Attorney General Website](#). Tenant housing advocacy services are also available for both tenants and landlords: [Home Line](#).

Approved Housing Support settings may not be the preferred living situation for many seniors and individuals with disabilities. Housing Support participants should be offered several [housing options](#) and similar services if they choose to live in their own homes or apartments. [Housing Link](#) can help Housing Support participants find affordable housing and offers landlords the opportunity to list their own rental properties.

MINNESOTA HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAM

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What are allowable costs for “housing expenses”?

Answer: Rent, utilities including phone, furniture and bus. For Board and Lodges, this includes operating costs of a building such as: taxes, insurance, maintenance, building service contracts such as snow removal and yard maintenance, debt service, fuel, food, utilities, household supplies, and other expenses necessary to provide room and board. Services to the tenant are not considered housing costs. Allowable Expenses can be found on the DHS-7127-ENG 6-15 State form.

2. The new Housing Support statute says licensed and registered settings must ensure that participants have, “food preparation and service for three nutritional meals a day on site.” What does that mean?

Answer: Housing Support providers need to ensure that the three meals a day are nutritious. They can do this in three ways: prepare and serve three nutritious meals daily to each resident or provide residents with raw food and supervise meal preparation and service three times daily, or otherwise ensure the provision of three nutritious meals daily. For guidance on standards for a “nutritious meal”, providers can consult with public health officials. DHS can also help connect providers with SNAP outreach resources if needed.

3. Are Housing Support providers required to provide special diets such as gluten free, lactose free, or supplemental diets (Boost/Ensure)?

Answer: Housing Support does not require providers to accommodate special diets. Providers should check with their licensing authority for additional requirements.

4. The new Housing Support statute says licensed and registered settings must ensure that participants have, “...cooling, supplies, and parts and tools to repair and maintain equipment and facilities.” What does that mean?

Answer: Housing Support providers need to ensure that the settings where Housing Support recipients live have the materials and resources required to provide for residents' health and well-being. For example, air conditioning is not required if fans or other methods provide for the residents' health and well-being. Providers should use their best judgment to ensure that the minimum standards are met in your particular setting. Providers should check with their licensure for more specific guidance on compliance with physical plant issues.

5. Are phone and internet required provisions of room and board?

Answer: Licensed and registered providers must ensure there is at least one telephone per site is available to residents. Internet service is not required.

6. What are the changes for housing with services – independent (HWS-I) and habitability inspections?

Answer: Effective 7/1/19, HWS-I providers will be allowed to use a Habitability Inspection for each unit to document that the setting is authorized for Housing Support. Providers will no longer need to register buildings with MDH as part of the HWS-I program. Every unit will need a habitability inspection, not just the building. This will include existing units that have a current HWS registration, as those registrations expire 7/31/19. The form can be found here: <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfservlet/Public/DHS-7123-ENG>. If you believe there is a benefit to your organization continuing to operate under an HWS registration after 7/1/19, please contact your local county to discuss. Anybody who is newly housed in a unit before 7/1/19 will still need a Housing With Services Registration for their building. You can submit documentation of HWS registration when requesting vendor numbers. Guidance will be forthcoming on how/when we will be verifying Habitability Inspections; with HWS registration gone, there will need to be verification. Providers will not need to renew their HWS registrations after July 1, 2019 provided that they have habitability inspections in place.

7. What are the disabilities that qualify an individual?

Answer: Any physical, mental or chemical disability that prevents a person from obtaining self-supporting employment.

8. What are the new Housing Support changes for individual budgeting and reporting?

Answer: People who receive Housing Support and work will have a Housing Support benefit based on an estimate of income for the next 6 months. If income changes, contact Financial Assistance so they can determine benefit allocation.

9. How will we be notified when they change Housing Support policy? Answer: DHS may release a bulletin on the DHS's Housing Support page. DHS is also working to establish a forum for sharing information and updates with all vendors and providers across the state. You can contact your local county and they will work with you to answer questions.

Please note that that this document is not legal advice and should not be construed as such. It is intended to be an informational guide. Additionally, this document is updated periodically, any changes to Minnesota statute or from DHS supersede that which is referenced in this document.

10. I am a residential treatment facility. How does Housing Support help when individuals transition back to the community? Transitioning from residential treatment facilities is a basis of eligibility effective July 1, 2020. The intent is to reduce the number of people who leave residential treatment into homelessness. This benefit provides up to three months of Housing Support. This basis does not require income or asset verification, or an interview unless needed to confirm information. During the three months the Housing Support vendor will work with the individual to gather documentation to maintain Housing Support or assist in transiting to a different setting.

MINNESOTA HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAM

PARTICIPANT BENEFITS AND RESOURCES

Most people who receive Housing Support are also eligible for other public benefits that could be affected by income. Medical Assistance and SNAP (food support) are two other common benefit programs individuals eligible for Housing Support may be eligible to access. Upon discharge from the Housing Support settings, staff are **required** to inform individuals that they may be eligible for SNAP benefits.

Benefits Planning

It is important for people who receive any public assistance benefit (and the people who help them) to understand how benefits work together and how changes in income, resources and living situation affects each program. It is also important to plan for expected changes such as going from one assistance program to another (e.g., GA to SSI), or physically moving (e.g., Housing Support setting to own apartment) or going to work and having earned income. This is called "benefits planning."

The Disability Benefits 101 web site www.DB101.org is an excellent resource to help understand disability related benefits, how they can work together (or not) and how work might impact those benefits. DB101.org has a live chat option and a direct phone number for the Disability Linkage Line so you can verify benefits and get answers to questions.

If a person is receiving Social Security disability benefits or SSI and is interested in going to work, a great resource is the Minnesota Work Incentives Connection. They can help clearly explain the effect work will have on benefits. **Minnesota Work Incentives Connection (1-800-976-6728)** www.mnworkincentives.com